

Message Text

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PAGE 01 PORT L 00984 051835Z

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ACTION AF-18

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FM AMEMBASSY PORT LOUIS

TO SECSTATE WASHDC 4160

INFO USMISSION USUN NY

AMEMBASSY PRETORIA

C O N F I D E N T I A L PORT LOUIS 984

E.O. 11652: N/A

TAGS: PFOR, SF, MP

SUBJ: SOUTH AFRICAN CREDENTIALS CHALLENGE: REPERCUSSIONS IN
MAURITIUS

REF: USUN 3618

1. MOVE ON PART MAURITIAN AMBASSADOR TO UNITED NATIONS, RAMPHUL, IN SPEARHEADING CHALLENGE TO SOUTH AFRICAN CREDENTIALS MADE HEADLINE NEWS HERE. WORD ON HIS ACTION REACHED MAURITIUS JUST AT TIME FOREIGN MINISTER DUVAL PREPARING TO LEAVE ON TRIP TO INDIA AND EUROPE. DUVAL, WHO AT AIRPORT SAME TIME IBRD PRESIDENT MCNAMARA DEPARTING MAURITIUS, WAS VISIBLY DISTRAUGHT OVER RAMPHUL'S SPEECH WHICH WAS COORDINATED WITH FOREIGN MINISTRY HERE. DUVAL, IN FACT IS SAID TO HAVE SENT TELEGRAM FROM AIRPORT ORDERING RAMPHUL TO RETRACT.

2. PRESS NOW SPECULATING THAT MAURITIAN AMBASSADOR'S ACTION WITH RESPECT SOUTH AFRICA WOULD LEAD LATTER TO CANCEL OUT RESULTS PAINSTAKING NEGOTIATIONS FOR SOUTH AFRICAN PURCHASES OF MAURITIAN TEA AND FOR IMPORTS TO MAURITIUS OF SOUTH AFRICAN ANIMAL FODDER.

ALSO BRUITED THAT SOUTH AFRICA MIGHT EVEN RETALIATE BY PLACING EMBARGO ON MAURITIAN-BOUND GOODS BEING TRANSSHIPPED FROM SOUTH AFRICAN PORTS, THUS, EFFECTIVELY CRIPPLING COMMERCE TO MAURITIUS.

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PAGE 02 PORT L 00984 051835Z

3. ACTING PERMSEC OF FONMIN PARFAIT CONFIRMED OCTOBER 5 THAT SOUTH AFRICAN GOVERNMENT HAD, IN FACT, FILED HARSH PROTEST WITH MAURITIUS, AND HIMSELF ECHOED CONCERN SHOWN IN PRESS. PARFAIT SAID HE HOPED, HOWSVER, THAT PRIME MINISTER RAMGOOLAM, WHO NOW IN NEW YORK, WOULD PUT SITUATION TO RIGHTS.

COMMENT: THIS, OF COURSE, NOT FIRST TIME THAT MAURITIAN AMBASSADOR RAMPHUL, WHO HAS REPUTATION FOR FREEWHEELING, HAS MOVED INDEPENDENTLY ON EXPLOSIVE ISSUES NOT WHOLLY SHARED WITHIN GOM. GENERAL FEELING HERE IS QUITE HIGH AGAINST HIM, GIVEN THIS COUNTRY'S DEPENDENCE IN TRADE AREA ON CORRECT RELATIONS WITH SOUTH AFRICA.

SULLIVAN

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